# Pandemic Ethics

2020 was a year of consequence: twelve wild months of historical events and cultural moments that will have a lasting impact on our world. One of the most interesting things about such a year is the way it brings us face-to-face with our own standards of ethics. We all grew and changed, and so did our way of interacting with others and relating to the world around us.

In 2021, many people consider it a matter of respect to maintain six feet of distance from others—that may be a feature in your new personal code of ethics, or not. Yet two years ago, you would have never guessed your approach to social distance might be an essential part of what you consider ethical conduct or misconduct in public. Your system of personal ethics has undoubtedly evolved, even throughout the pandemic.

Public health straddles the rights of individuals and the greater good of the larger community. So does your personal system of ethics. For both, decisions have lasting repercussions for many. As a senior in high school preparing for college, you're at a foundational age in adulthood. You just lived through a pivotal year for the modern world. And you are that world's future. That makes you uniquely suited to decide what the future should look like. Now's your chance to think about it.

Write a 2–4 page essay answering the following questions:

1. In a global pandemic, how important is it for an individual to have a defined ethical code?
2. What does yours look like?
3. How do your ethical standards serve you and others? How have they changed from your personal standards pre-2020? How have they evolved throughout 2020?
4. Does society need a structured code of ethics in a time like this?
5. What should that look like?
6. Does your vision for an ethical framework for an entire society serve everyone in it? Does it need to?